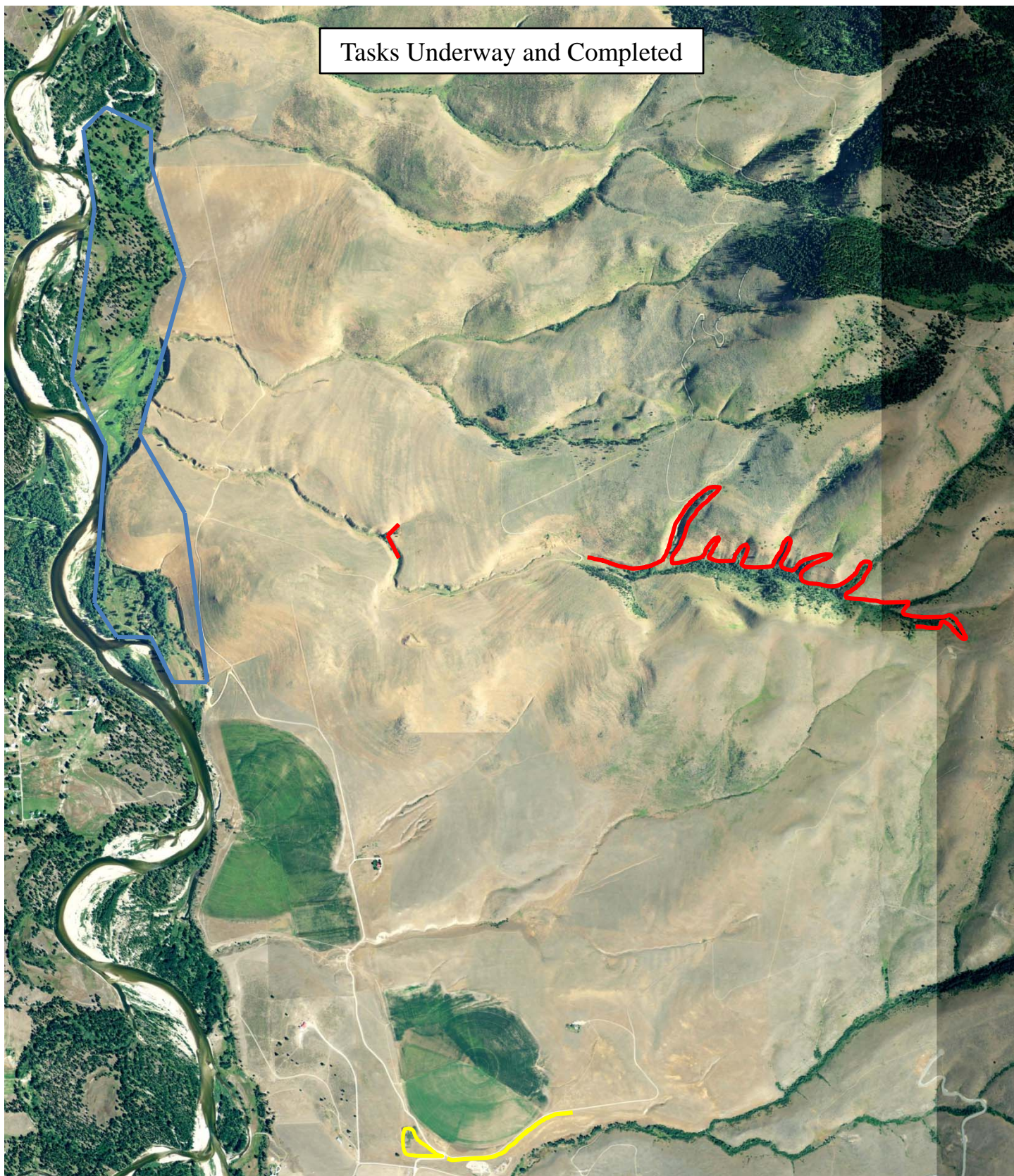


Field Note

June 1st – 4th

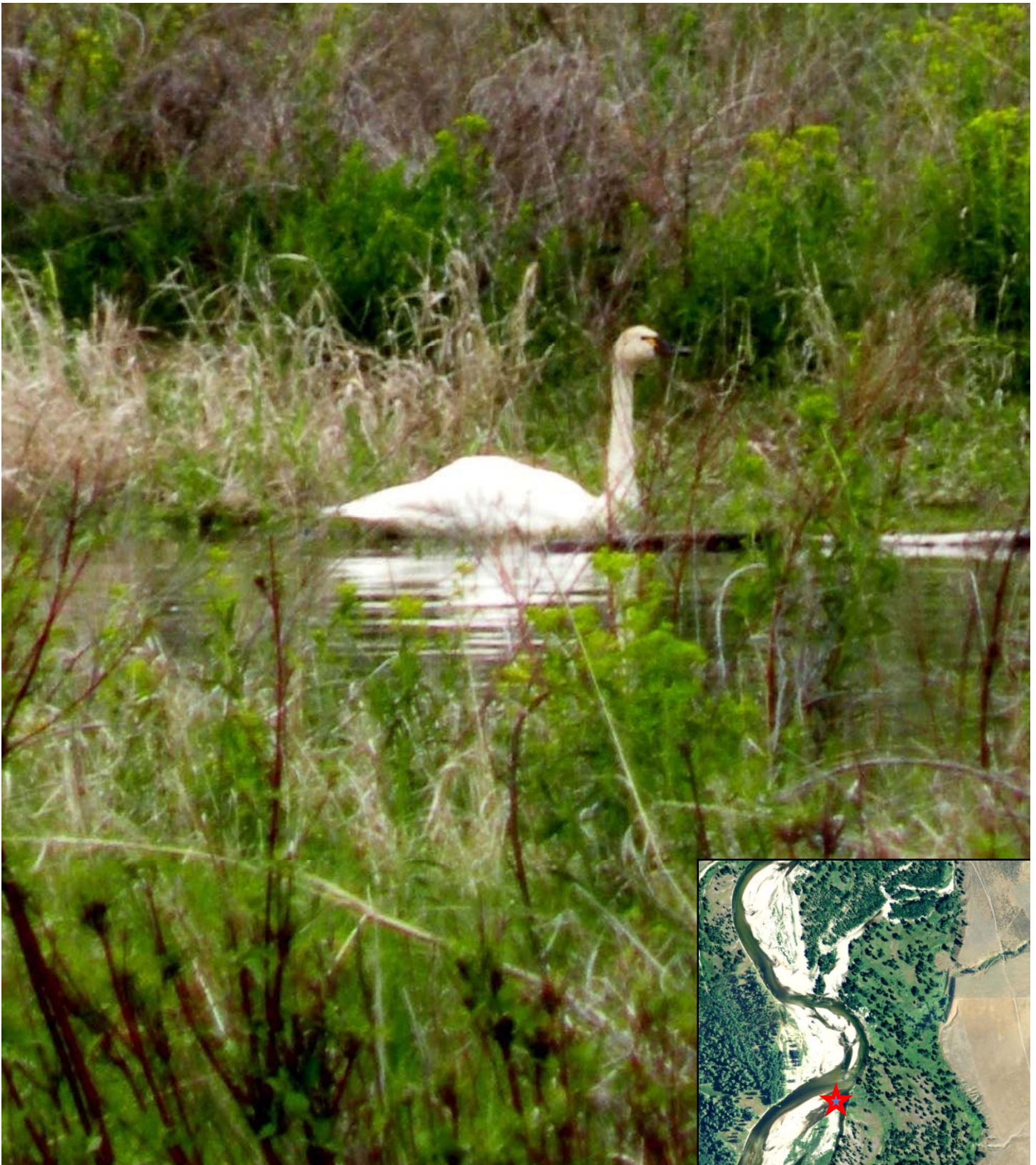


By Jeff Clarke



Tasks Underway and Completed

We added additional signs to the shooting preserve (blue) to ensure that it is up to code. Signs labeled "Shooting Preserve No Trespassing" are posted every 250 feet around its perimeter. We continue to place exclosures around native trees near the forest's edge in the tongue creek drainage. Progress continues down its South edge (red). We started tagging the planted trees near the entrance (yellow). In time, most trees will be labeled.



The Bitterroot river continues to swell. This tundra swan (identified by the yellow spot near its eye) finds refuge from the rapid current in an inlet near the Northern flood plain. They typically spend summer months in the tundra in far North America. I wonder why this bird chose to stay here for the summer.



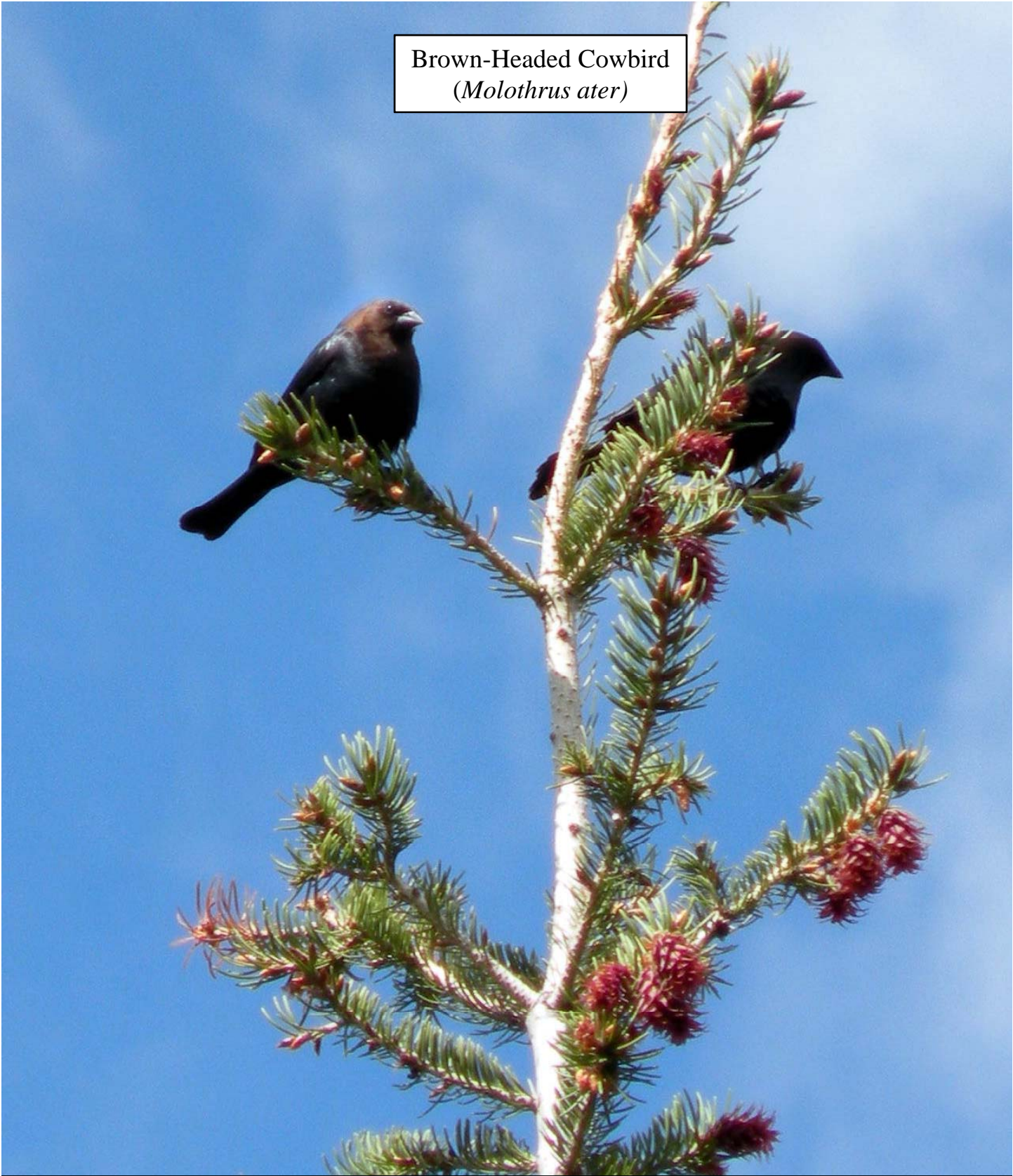
This is the vibrant blooms of the hound's tongue weed. Their seeds are a nuisance to any animal with fur or a checkered flannel, for they stick to nearly everything. This mode of transport has proven to be an effective means of seed dispersal...they are all over the ranch. It is toxic to animals, causing the liver cells to slowly die. It can kill if consumed in mass.

I came across this boreal toad (western toad) on the steep, grassy slope of tongue creek. The large white stripe down it's back provides a positive ID. Their breeding season starts in late May or early June, at which time they are almost always near water...not this individual. When temperatures are cool, they will sun themselves. Maybe this toad was doing just that.





The Western Salsify opens early in the morning and typically closes by mid afternoon. Their heads eventually transform into a white puffball, similar to a dandelion. They've begun to bloom in abundance in the last few weeks. They will stick around all summer long.

A photograph of two Brown-Headed Cowbirds perched on a pine branch. The birds are dark brown with a lighter brown head. They are positioned on a branch that has green needles and clusters of reddish-brown pine cones. The background is a clear blue sky.

Brown-Headed Cowbird
(*Molothrus ater*)

The brown headed cow-bird parasitizes other birds nests. Some scientists think that the adults are incapable of bringing enough food to their young. When their chicks share nests with other bird species, the mass chirping encourages the unknowing parent to feed them extra. The cowbird chick is more aggressive, therefore it receives more food. When nesting with two other chicks, studies show that cowbird chicks get 50% of the food and grow faster.



I came across several tent caterpillars in tongue creek. Most “tents” were placed on chokecherry bushes. From my observations, the caterpillars stayed on their infested bush. Most species will not damage to forests.



Chokecherries bloomed this week.





This is the first yellow Indian paintbrush I've seen. Prairie smoke hangs in the background.